

How to beat interview nerves

Top 12 tips to keeping cool under pressure and to help beat those interview nerves

Prepare : Always research the company. Most will have a website, Facebook page, Linked In account etc. – use these to find out what the company does, customers, ethics/aims, and any information that could be useful to the job. This could help you formulate some questions of your own for the interviewers.

Dress for success : We all know to dress smart for interviews, but remember to be comfortable too – you don't want to be fidgeting through your interview. If you're not sure what to wear, call the HR team and ask what the dress code is.

Normalise : It is completely normal to feel nervous so don't try to fight it too much, it shows you care about the outcome and want the job. Accept that you feel anxious and think of the interview as a conversation – it's your chance to find out what kind of employer they are. Remember, everyone gets nervous with interviews!

Water : It can be difficult to sleep the night before, meaning people go straight for the coffee before an interview. Coffee, Pepsi, Redbull etc. intensify the nervous energy and adrenaline rushing around your body meaning you'll feel even worse. Water keeps you hydrated so you don't get dry mouth, and keeps you focused.

Breathe : Breathing isn't usually something we try to control, and when we're nervous we can end up breathing really fast. Slow your breathing down by taking deep slow breaths, in through the nose for 3 seconds, out through the mouth.

Sleep : It is hard to sleep if you're thinking about the interview the next day, but try to get 8 hours of sleep the night before. If you're struggling, try the deep breathing exercises in bed, or imagine all your nervous energy slowly moving to your little toe so it's all contained in one small place and won't keep you awake.

Notes : A common effect of being nervous is feeling like you're mind's gone blank and you can't remember what you did yesterday! Take a small notebook with you so when you're waiting for your interview, you can be making notes of examples for different topics. This focuses the mind, and helps to remember useful examples.

Visualise : Picture yourself in the interview room answering questions confidently, and then imagine being told you got the job. This can work wonders for making sure you believe in yourself, you CAN do it. This also works the other way – picture the worst thing you think will happen and how you will react to it. Try to think of ways to overcome this e.g. you're worried you won't know the answer to a question – think of responses you can give, such as "can I just have a moment to think about that?" or "could you explain further please?".

Time : You don't want to feel flustered or rushed, or even risk being late, so give yourself plenty of time. It might help to do a practice run of getting to the place of interview so you know how long it will take and where it is. Plan to get there 10 minutes early so you have time to settle, mentally prepare yourself, and do your deep breathing exercises.

Be Positive : You've already been selected to come for an interview as they clearly liked what you put on the application form. They think you might be a good fit – know that you are and show them that. Remember to smile and have a firm handshake. If you think it will go well – it will!

Practice : You can never predict all the questions you will be asked but you can practice being put on the spot, answering unknown questions. Try practicing with your parents, partner, friends and pretend it's an actual interview. Their feedback will be helpful for you. You can also use the person specification to anticipate some topics for questions i.e. a requirement for customer service might question experiencing a difficult customer.

Expel the energy : There are many techniques for getting rid of nervous energy. Some keep a hair bobble/elastic band on their wrist and gently snap it against their inner wrist. Others use pressure points; they use the other hand to tap the outside of their little finger or index finger. Some rub their watch, fiddle with rings/bracelets etc. The best method is exercise – it doesn't have to be an hour at the gym, simply go for a walk in the morning. It clears the head, burns off excess adrenaline and releases endorphins to make you feel more positive, which in turn leads to confidence!